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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT TUESDAY, February 4, 1941.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MEAT QUESTIONS!" Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Winter, spring, summer, fall -- no matter what the season, the mailbag always has letters about meat. This week's mail is no exception. One letter here asks about corning beef. Another reports mold on a smoked turkey. Then here's an inquiry about keeping frozen lamb. And last of all come a few questions about sausage.

First let's answer the letter from a housewife who has just moved to a farm and wants information on preparing corned beef.

Corned beef is beef pickled with salt, saltpeter, and sugar. The salt and saltpeter cure the meat. And the saltpeter gives the reddish or pink color to the meat. The sugar is for flavor. It cuts the harshness of the salt.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., has a bulletin giving complete directions for preparing corned beef. The bulletin is called "Beef on the Farm." It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1415. And it is free as long as the supply lasts. A postcard will bring that bulletin to you.

But before you receive the bulletin, brief directions for corning beef may help you.

For corned beef use the cheaper cuts of meat such as the plate, rump, and chuck. Meat from a fat animal makes better corned beef than meat from a thin animal. Cut beef in pieces 5 or 6 inches square, and evenly thick so they will pack in even layers in the barrel or jar.

The first step in corning is to pack the beef in a clean jar or barrel with alternate layers of dry salt. Use 8 lbs. of salt for each 100 lbs. of meat. Have a layer of salt on the bottom and a thick layer on top of the meat. The salted meat stands overnight. Then comes the second step. Over the meat pour a solution of sugar, and saltpeter. For 100 lbs. of meat use 4 lbs. sugar, 2 oz. of saltpeter dissolved in 1 gallon of water. Follow it with 3 gallons of clear water. How much of this curing material you need depends on how much meat you are corning. Be sure to cover all the meat with the brine. A loose wooden cover with a weight on it will hold the meat down.

The corning takes 28 to 40 days. Afterward hang the meat to drain thoroughly before you wrap or smoke it.

Look out for spoilage if you corn beef during the winter and keep it through to the summer. Keep an eye on the brine, as the weather warms up in the spring. If the brine begins to look ropy, take the meat out, wash it with hot water and a stiff brush, and then put it down with fresh brine.

Those are brief directions for corning beef. But to do the job well, you need complete directions. You'll find them in that free bulletin mentioned a moment ago -- Farmers' Bulletin 1415, "Beef on the Farm." You can order it from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Now for the second question. A lady writes that one of her Christmas presents was a smoked turkey. She opened the wrapping the other day and found the turkey covered with mold -- especially thick mold in the cavity inside the bird. She wants to know how to get the mold off, and whether it is safe to eat turkey that has had mold on it.

Mold often develops on old hams or smoked turkey if you keep them in a damp place. If the mold grows deeply into the meat it may affect the flavor. Ordinarily you can rub off or trim off the mold and the meat will not be damaged. Rubbing

the molded surface with a cloth moistened in vinegar will usually remove the moldy taste.

Question No. 3 is about frozen lamb. A farm housewife asks what temperature is best for keeping frozen lamb.

Meat scientists report that frozen lamb will keep successfully at a temperature of 10 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, but that the ideal temperature is from zero to 10 degrees below zero.

Now here's a sausage question: "Please tell me how much fat and how much lean to use in a fresh sausage mixture. My sausage so often cooks hard and dry and doesn't brown nicely. I wonder if there is too much lean meat in it."

You have the answer. Too little fat in sausage makes it hard, dry, and difficult to brown. A good mixture is about one-third fat and two-thirds lean. If you use too much fat, the sausage will be too greasy and shrink too much in cooking.

The last question also is about fresh sausage. A housewife wants to know what seasonings to use. Most people like fresh sausage with salt and sugar, powdered sage, pepper, and cloves or nutmeg for seasoning.

You will find directions for making different kinds of sausage in the bulletin, "Pork on the Farm!" This is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1186. And you order it as you do the beef bulletin -- just by writing a postcard to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and asking for it.

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